

California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley
Draft Strategic Action Proposal

The San Joaquin Valley: California's 21st Century Opportunity

Preface

Governor's Executive Order

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger established the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley through Executive Order S-5-05 signed on June 24, 2005 in Fresno. The San Joaquin Valley region includes eight counties—Kern, Tulare, Kings, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties—with sixty-two cities and a total population of more than 3.4 million residents. The San Joaquin Valley has a long history of contributions to the success and magic of California, but it also is a region facing many challenges. And, while elected officials and civic leaders throughout the San Joaquin Valley have been working hard to improve their local communities, they also have requested assistance from the state and federal governments. Governor Schwarzenegger responded by directing his Cabinet to join forces with the leaders and residents of the San Joaquin Valley in an unprecedented effort to achieve the brightest future possible for the region. As the Governor stated in the Executive Order, “The strength of California is tied to the economic success of the San Joaquin Valley.” Thus, the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) accepted the Governor's charge with the inspired perspective that *the San Joaquin Valley is California's 21st Century Opportunity*.

The Board of the Partnership is comprised of twenty-six members appointed by the Governor—eight Cabinet Secretaries, eight locally-elected officials, eight civic leaders, and two Deputy Chairs (one elected official and one civic leader)—plus five liaisons to key policy bodies (Federal Interagency Task Force on the San Joaquin Valley, California Transportation Commission, California Air Resources Board, California Workforce Investment Board, and the Economic Strategy Panel). The Governor designated the Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency as Chair of the Partnership and directed preparation and submission of a Strategic Action Proposal for long-term well-being and economic prosperity in the San Joaquin Valley.

Focused Work Plan and Widespread Public Engagement

The Partnership Board members were appointed in September 2005 and the first Board Meeting was held September 16th in Stockton at the University of the Pacific. At the first meeting, the Board adopted a Work Plan (including Principles and Ground Rules) and established ten Work Groups (along with Scopes of Work based on Overview Reports) to focus on: Economic Development; Higher Education and Workforce Development; K-12 Education; Transportation; Land Use, Agriculture and Housing; Air Quality; Water; Energy; Health and Human Services; and Advanced Telecommunications and Information Technology. The thrust of the Work Groups was to focus on action, not more study. The Partnership reviewed recent studies about the San Joaquin Valley and summarized their recommendations as a beginning point in order to move forward as expeditiously as possible. More than 300 people participated in the Work Groups which were convened by Board members and supported by pro bono professional staffing from the Great Valley Center and California State University, Fresno.

In the last year the Partnership Board met ten times in publicly-noticed meetings and conducted Public Forums and Roundtables with Local Elected Officials in each of the eight counties to obtain input on the preparation of the Strategic Action Proposal. All San Joaquin Valley State Legislators and Members of Congress were invited to kick-off the Public Forums. More than 500 people participated in the Public Forums. These gatherings were held at such diverse locations as: University of California, Merced (UC Merced); Tulare County Convention Center; Hanford City Offices; Fresno Convention Center; Merced County Administration Center; Madera Children's Hospital; California State University, Stanislaus; Lodi Civic Auditorium; Madera Community College; Madera County Offices; California State University, Bakersfield, and California State University, Fresno. In addition, the Partnership Board met separately with the delegations of State and Federal elected representatives to ensure concurrence on the Strategic Action Plan. And, throughout the process, the Partnership benefited greatly by support from and collaboration with the Federal Interagency Task Force which was constituted in 2002 by federal Executive Order.

Positive Results To Date

The concentrated attention to the San Joaquin Valley by the Governor and the concerted efforts directed the Executive Order already have produced positive impacts, even before completion of the Strategic Action Proposal. It has energized public officials and existing civic organizations, reinforcing the value and power of regional collaboration to complement and leverage local efforts. To date the Partnership has resulted in several actions that benefit the San Joaquin Valley:

- The California Transportation Commission accelerated funding to begin construction of Highway 205 in San Joaquin County and construction of the Mission Avenue Interchange at Highway 99 (H 99) in Merced County to provide improved access to UC Merced.
- The Housing and Community Development Department awarded one of three new Enterprise Zones for Modesto and Stanislaus County.
- The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) accelerated completion of the Business Plan (component of Master Plan) for improving H 99 (274 miles between Bakersfield and Stockton) which calls for \$6 billion to be invested over the next decade. The Plan sets forth an economic development strategy for H 99 to continue as a "main street" of the San Joaquin Valley and as a backbone of the State's transportation system, as well as become a gateway for tourism in the San Joaquin Valley using state-of-the-art information technology at rest stops.
- The Governor and the Legislature earmarked \$1 billion from the General Obligation Bonds submitted to the voters in November 2006 to jumpstart H 99 improvements.
- The Great Valley Center and Caltrans cooperated on an international competition to invite innovative proposals for design of "GreenStops" (environmentally-friendly, resource-conserving, high-tech rest stops). This will become a signature design signature feature for H 99 as the "main street" of the San Joaquin Valley.
- The eight counties and their Councils of Government (COGs) joined forces to develop an integrated Regional Blueprint Plan and were awarded \$2 million for the first year and will be eligible for similar funding in the second year.

- The Partnership facilitated agreement among the Economic Development Organizations and Workforce Investment Boards in the region to target key industry clusters to promote investment and develop workforce.
- The Partnership and the Hospital Council of Northern and Central California developed the Central Valley Nursing Education Consortium to increase the number of annual registered nurse graduates by at least 250 individuals beginning in 2008.
- The Partnership studied and endorsed the establishment of a Medical Education Program at UC Merced and the development of an innovative healthcare network through the San Joaquin Valley.
- The Department of Managed Health Care and Department of Insurance awarded \$5 million to UC Merced for the development of a Medical Education Program (from a fund established as a condition of a merger among two companies).
- AT&T provided \$600,000 to connect and train residents of Pixley as a pilot for deployment of high-speed information technology in the San Joaquin Valley.
- The Resources Agency and Department of State Parks completed an assessment of needs, undertook an extensive outreach effort, and announced plans to significantly enhance, recreate, and celebrate the region's natural and cultural heritage through new State Parks in the San Joaquin Valley.
- The Governor and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency have directed up to \$1.5 million in additional funding to help train a skilled workforce, including: (a) up to \$1 million in Governor's discretionary funds to support a collaborative partnership to address workforce needs for a targeted industry sector or a prevalent workforce-related problem; and (b) \$500,000 from Workforce Investment Act discretionary funds to begin implementation of the proposal developed by the Partnership (for submission to the U.S. Department of Labor WIRED grant program) to advance collaboration among workforce development, economic development, education and employer stakeholders.
- The San Joaquin Valley Air Quality Management District has decided to establish a Clean Energy Office as recommended by the Partnership to facilitate air quality improvement by reducing pollution related to energy production and use.
- The Governor and Legislature approved \$5 million in the State Budget for Fiscal Year 2006-2007 to jumpstart implementation of the Strategic Action Proposal—a significant commitment to continuing to work together for the future of the San Joaquin Valley.

The above progress is the result of focused and strategic public-private cooperation by both civic leaders and public officials at all levels of government. It is solid evidence of the value of mobilizing purposeful leadership in a public-private partnership to improve the future of the San Joaquin Valley. It argues for a sustained effort to ensure that the San Joaquin Valley achieves its full potential as California's 21st Century Opportunity.

21st Century Opportunity

Although a region facing many challenges, the San Joaquin Valley has a wealth of strengths on which to build a very bright future. With focused attention and dedicated leadership, the San Joaquin Valley can not only improve the future for all residents, it can—and should—become synonymous with the “best” globally—“world-class” in every dimension. The San Joaquin Valley must lead California on sustainable growth—its civic leaders must be aggressive on economic development, fierce stewards of the environment, and ardent advocates for people. That vision for the future is entirely possible and will be achieved through implementation of this Strategic Action Plan. And, doing so will benefit all of California because *the San Joaquin Valley is California’s 21st Century Opportunity*.

Strategic Action Proposal

The following Strategic Action Proposal was prepared pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order and was developed based on recommendations from the Work Groups, input from the Public Forums and Local Elected Officials Roundtables, and consultation with State Legislative and Congressional representatives from the San Joaquin Valley.

The Strategic Action Proposal sets forth overall strategies and specific actions with accompanying metrics and indicators to measure progress. It builds on the existing strengths of the San Joaquin Valley and addresses the current challenges to minimize weaknesses. It recognizes the Valley’s heritage of agriculture as the foundation for economic development—as the roots to grow the future—and forges new frontiers for prosperity. It embraces and enhances the assets that define and unify the region—such as the San Joaquin River and Highway 99—as leading strategies to attract investment. It calls for a sustained public-private partnership over the next decade to mobilize the essential government and civic leadership to achieve measurable results. It proposes that the initial organizational structure for implementation (for up to the next two years) be established through a new Governor’s Executive Order and that State legislation then be enacted to ensure commitment and continuity for the full decade.

The Appendices contain copies of the Partnership documents and work products referenced above, including the Executive Order, Minutes of Board Meetings, Principles and Ground Rules, Socio-Economic Data about the Region and Individual Counties, Overview Reports and adopted Scopes of Work for the Work Groups, and the complete Work Group Reports.

We strongly and enthusiastically recommend approval and ratification of this Strategic Action Proposal as the framework for action and foundation for future investment to improve the economic prosperity and quality of life for the San Joaquin Valley.

Signed by Partnership Board Members